



ORGANIC FARMING RESEARCH FOUNDATION

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February 20, 2008

TO: H.R. 2419 Conferees
FROM: Undersigned Groups and Businesses

RE: Organic Research Funding in H.R. 2419 Conference Package

Dear H.R. 2419 Conferee,

The undersigned groups and businesses urge your attention to ensuring significant progress towards a fair share of agricultural research and education spending for organic farming and ranching. In crafting a final conference agreement on H.R. 2419, we strongly recommend that you accept the House policy language but the Senate funding provision for the Organic Agriculture Research and Extension Initiative (OREI)¹.

The Senate bill provides mandatory spending of \$16 million per year for OREI. The House bill provides only \$5 million per year, a negligible increase from the current funding of \$3 million per year.² The House policy language amendments add conservation outcomes and seed breeding to the program's purposes.

The Senate figure is still less than 0.7% of total USDA-REE expenditures in FY07. A "fair share" of USDA-REE research expenditures for organic, at current U.S. market share of about 4%, would be roughly \$100 Million per year. By FY2013, the market share of organic foods is expected to be nearly 10%. A significant increase in OREI funding is absolutely crucial to making progress towards the fair-share benchmark.

USDA-REE expenditures directed explicitly to research and information programs for organic agriculture in FY 07 were only slightly above 1% of total REE spending. This discrepancy in the share of research funding spent on organics is detrimental to an industry that relies intensively on management and information for its success. In fact, lack of knowledge is the biggest limiting factor for farmers and ranchers who are looking to take advantage of the growing organic market demand and profits that it brings.

¹ OREI is established in Section 1672B(e) of the Food, Agriculture, Conservation and Trade Act of 1990, as amended by Section 7218 of the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002. Senate provision of H.R. 2419 is Section 7104; House provision is Section 7310.

² OFRF's initial recommendation last year for mandatory organic research funding was \$40 Million/yr.

Without an increase in research and education spending to a level that is at least commensurate with organic's share of the domestic food retail market, U.S. farmers will lack the necessary information they need to compete against rising imports, and participate in the economic opportunity presented by the rapidly growing organic market.

OREI is USDA's premier competitive research and education program specifically dedicated to investigation of organic agriculture. Research and extension projects funded through the OREI competitive grant program focus on meeting the production, marketing and policy needs of the growing organic industry. But the funding is extremely small compared to the research and education needs. In fact, of the 210 fundable proposals submitted for Integrated Organic Program funding between 2004 and 2006, only 29 proposals, (13.8%), could be funded due to the limited money available.

We understand that there are enormous pressures on you to cut Farm Bill spending. We are mindful of Chairman Peterson's instruction last spring that, "everyone will be unhappy." We accept that organic agriculture should be treated equally with respect to the shortfall from our goals. The Senate bill's funding level for OREI would still be far short of our fair-share goal, but would at least get us closer to equally sharing the fiscal pressures.

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,

NATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

Organic Farming Research Foundation
Organic Trade Association
Sustainable Agriculture Coalition
National Organic Coalition
National Center for Appropriate Technology
Farm Aid
Center for Rural Affairs
National Campaign for Sustainable Agriculture
National Catholic Rural Life Conference
National Family Farm Coalition
Harvest Christian Fellowship
Union of Concerned Scientists
The Organic Center
Organic Seed Alliance
Organic Seed Growers and Trade Association
Beyond Pesticides
Organic Consumers Association
Center for Food Safety
Food and Water Watch
The Rural Advancement Foundation International – USA
National Cooperative Grocers Association

Community Food Security Coalition

STATE AND LOCAL ORGANIZATIONS

Southern Sustainable Agriculture Working Group
Midwest Organic and Sustainable Education Service
Iowa Organic Association
Practical Farmers of Iowa
Raccoon River Watershed Association (IA)
Heartland Center (IN)
Minnesota Project
Northern Plains Sustainable Agriculture Society (ND)
Dakota Rural Action
Community Alliance with Family Farmers (CA)
California Certified Organic Farmers
California Farmers Union
Agriculture & Land-Based Training Association (CA)
California Food and Justice Coalition
Valley of Heart's Delight Project (CA)
Alemany Farm Collective (CA)
Endangered Habitats League (CA)
Pennsylvania Association for Sustainable Agriculture
Pennsylvania Certified Organic
Tuscarora Organic Growers Cooperative (PA)
Northeast Organic Dairy Producers Alliance
Northeast Organic Farming Association of Massachusetts
Northeast Organic Farming Association of New York
Northeast Organic Farming Association of Connecticut
Northeast Organic Farming Association of New Hampshire
Northeast Organic Farming Association of New Jersey
Northeast Organic Farming Association of Rhode Island
Northeast Organic Farming Association of Vermont
Northeast Organic Farming Association Interstate Council
Maine Organic Farmers and Gardeners Association
Farm Fresh Rhode Island
Agriculture Missions, Inc. (NY)
Green Party of Delaware
Delaware Local Food Buying Club
Maryland Organic Food and Farming Association
Virginia Association for Biological Farming
Georgia Organics
Environmental Coalition of Mississippi
Florida Certified Organic Growers and Consumers, Inc.
Texas Organic Cotton Marketing Cooperative
Missouri Organic Association

Michigan Land Use Institute
Michigan Food and Farming Systems – MIFFS
Michigan Organic Food and Farming Alliance
Southeast Michigan Land Conservancy
Alternative Energy Resources Organization (MT)
Montana Organic Producer Co-op
Oregon Tilth
Provender Alliance (OR)
Adelante Mujeres (OR)
The Washington Sustainable Food & Farming Network
Tilth Producers of Washington
Partnership for Earth Spirituality (NM)
Hawaii Organic Farmers Association

ORGANIC PRODUCERS AND HANDLERS

Walter Robb, Co-President, Whole Foods Market
Rick Antle, CEO, Tanimura and Antle, Inc, CA
Melissa Hughes, General Counsel, CROPP Cooperative/Organic Valley Family of Farms
Myra Goodman, Earthbound Farms, CA
Gary Hirshberg, CE-Yo and Nancy Hirshberg, VP Natural Resources, Stonyfield Farm, VT
Grant Lundberg, CEO, Lundberg Family Farms, Richvale CA
Nell Newman, President, Newman's Own Organics, Aptos, CA
Frederick Schilling, Founder, Dagoba Chocolate, OR
Melody Meyer, Director of Produce Purchasing, Albert's Organics, Inc., CA
Nate Morr, SunOpta Global Organic Ingredients, Inc, Aptos, CA
Keith Olcott, Equal Exchange, West Bridgewater, MA
Bu Nygrens, Veritable Vegetable, San Francisco, CA
Heidi Rayher, Regional Produce Procurement Team Leader, Whole Foods Market – California
Distribution Center
Pam Marrone, CEO/Founder, Marrone Organic Innovations, Inc, Davis, CA
John Teixeira, Lone Willow Farms, Firebaugh, CA
Bill Sutherland, Sutherland Produce Sales, El Cajon, CA
Luke Patruno, MCL Distributing, Inc., Los Angeles, CA
Steve Taft President, Eco Farms, Temecula, CA
Lorena Estrada, Sales Manager and Darlene Eells, Registration/Certification Coordinator
Manager, Sundance Natural Foods Company, Oceanside, CA
Erin Barnett, Director, Local Harvest, Inc., Santa Cruz, CA
Charlie Heermans, President, Guaranteed Organic Certification Agency, Temecula, CA
John K. Ashby, General Manager, California Natural Products, Lathrop, CA
Helmut Klauer, Owner, Classic Organic, Gaviota, CA
Larry Hirahara, Larry Hirahara Family Farms, Madera, CA
Gay Timmons, Oh, Oh Organic, Inc. Milpitas, CA
Representing:

VegeTech Inc. - Certified Organic Botanical Extracts

Lemur Int'l - Organic Healing and Essential Oils of Madagascar

Organic India ® - Certified Organic Castor Oil
Oh, Oh Organic Cosmetic Ingredients
Glory Bee Foods, Org. beeswax, honey and bee stuff!
Improve USA Org. Aloe Vera Products
Sanmark Specialty Oils - Evening Primrose, Pumpkin Seed, Pomegranate and other
Oils
Tocobiol™ Non-GMO Mixed Tocopherol
Ciranda, Inc. - Org. Coconut, Palm, Olive and Cocoa products
Mushroom Specialties/Mother Earth Organic Mushrooms
January Hodgson, LLC Officer, Savor Specialty Foods, Atlanta, GA
Michael Tuohy, Chef/Owner, Woodfire Grill, Atlanta, GA
Chef Carvel Grant Goud, We're Cooking Inc. dba Canoe Restaurant, Atlanta, GA
Olivia Sargeant, Owner & General Manager, Farm255, Athens, GA
Diane Dempster, Charlie's Produce, Seattle, WA
Mark Tudor, Tudor Hills Vineyard, Grandview, WA
Jack Salemme, President, Northwest Growers Marketing Inc., Pasco, WA
Marnie Rundiks and Krista Golly, Growers Organic, Denver, CO
Thomas McCracken, Green Earth Farm, Saguache, CO
Steve Pierce, My Neighbor Steve's Pasta Sauce, Baldwin, KS
Tracey Graham, Marketing Manager, Emporia Farmers' Market, Emporia, KS
Laurie Moore, Owner, Moore Farms and Friends, Woodland, AL
Jamie Samuels, President and Kevin McCluney, Local Foods Coordinator, ASU Clean Energy,
Tempe, AZ
Rodney LeBlanc, RKL & Associates, LLC, Winsted, CT
Kate Elsberry, C.H. Robinson Worldwide, Southeast Produce Sales, Miami, FL
Francis Thicke, Radiance, Dairy, Fairfield, IA
Art Scheele, President/ Owner, American Organic Seed & Grain, Warren, IL
Rick Christianson, Co-op Partners Warehouse, St Paul, MN
Jim and Robbins Hail, Bear Creek Farms, Osceola, MO
Bonnie C. Poux, President, Access Organics, Inc., Kalispell, MT
Robert Simmons, Senior Executive Partner, International Certification Services, Inc., dba
Farm Verified Organic, Medina, ND
Miriam MacGillis, OP, Genesis Farm, Blairstown, NJ
Mary G. Woltz, Owner/Operator, Bees' Needs, L.L.C Sag Harbor, NY
Becky Rondy, Green Edge Organic Gardens, Amesville, OH
Tim P. Miller, Millberg Farm, Kyle, TX
The Reverend Roger W. Verley, Managing Partner, Verley Family Farm, LLC. Annandale, VA